

MISS MONKTON'S MARRIAGE.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "A FRENCH HEIRESS IN HER OWN CHATEAU."

CHAPTER I.—(CONTINUED.)

The dinner mistake was not the only one made by Mrs. Bushe and her servants that night. The best and largest bedroom in the house had been prepared for Sir George. He had made up his mind that it would be much more convenient to everybody if he slept in a little room near the hall door, which was at present filled up with old books, boxes and lumber. It was therefore closed out and made ready for him. Then when it was finished, and Sir George walked in to look at it, he immediately ordered out the fire and the carpet. His habits were simple, he said. He did not wish to accustom himself to luxuries, or to give any unnecessary trouble.

All being at last arranged, Letitia and her cousin wished Sir George good-night and went up stairs together. Before going into her own room, which was inside Florida's, the girl stopped to kiss her and say good-night. Mrs. Bushe was a good deal taller than Letitia. She held her in her arms, and looked down into the bright face with tired loving eyes.

"Cousin Florida, you look worn out," said Letitia. "Now listen to me. Don't get up to-morrow morning. I will give papa his breakfast."

"I could not desert my post, my dear, thank you."

"O, well, you need not blame me for being obstinate. What plagues men are! Don't you think papa must drive his aid-de-camp quite mad? And who do you suppose he has made into a hero now?"

"I can't guess, indeed," said Mrs. Bushe.

"That stupid heavy fellow, Humphrey Barrett. He saw him in town last week. And what do you think? He told him that this ball of theirs is given in compliment of me. Because I told Humphrey I was fond of dancing. That must be a story, you know. Mrs. Barrett told you of it before."

"She did," said Florida, coloring. "But to do them justice, her chief idea seemed to be that it would please you."

"O!" said Letitia.

Perhaps Florida Bushe was scarcely a fit person to have the care of her, for she never could help telling her the truth. Under Letitia's smiling penetrating gaze, no plot, no secret, was safe with her cousin. She looked away, she tried to move aside, but Letitia took hold of her arms and held her fast.

"There is some plot I see," she said. "And you seem to be in it. You, the Barretts, and papa. What does it all mean?"

"A plot, my dear!" said Florida. "I can't understand you. You are talking nonsense."

Letitia's laughing face grew graver and more determined.

"A plain question, then—and I'll have a plain answer. Have you all taken it into your heads that I am to marry young Barrett? Tell me the truth, pray!"

"Letitia, have I ever deceived you?"

"Cousin Florida, if you ever tried, you never succeeded. Come, you must not be angry. You love me, I know; you don't wish to make me miserable, and the less you say, the more I shall suspect. Unless you tell me the whole truth at once, I won't go to the ball. I'll fall down stairs and break my leg."

"A sprained ankle would answer the purpose, and be well sooner," said Florida, smiling faintly. "Well, I'll trust to your honor to behave like a gentle woman. Mrs. Barrett has taken it into her head, certainly; she has hinted as much to me several times. And I suppose her son has too. It seems from what you say he has made some advances to Sir George, which have not been unfavorably received."

"And they all forget that there is one other person to be consulted!" cried Letitia, stamping her foot. "What have I done to be given away to a lout like that! I hate and detest him! How can papa—how can you think such a thing possible?"

"He is here, you see, to a fine property. There is some talk of his standing for the county. His politics and your papa's are the same; and no one has a word to say against his character."

"Ugly wretch!" said Letitia. "I hate these old country families. Their brains are as quick as the mad in their fields. When I want to bury myself alive, I'll do it under pleasant circumstances. You never thought I would marry him, surely?"

Her eyes sparkled indignantly as she looked at her cousin. Florida kissed her flushed forehead, and answered quietly.

"I hardly thought you would be pleased with the idea. Now go to bed, my dear child, and to sleep. Of course your own wishes will be consulted."

"I should think so!" said Letitia, beginning to laugh.

Two hours later, Mrs. Bushe stole into her charge's room. Letitia was sleeping like a child, though there was a damp look about the long eyelashes that lay on her rosy cheeks. She moved and smiled as her cousin bent over her. Was she dreaming of the ball?

CHAPTER II.

A HERO IN THE SNOW.

When they came down next morning, it was snowing thickly. Sir George sat in the oldest corner of the library, writing letters, and grumbling about something that Crosby had forgotten. Presently he called Letitia to copy some papers for him, and she set to work at once, writing a neat little hand which satisfied her father. They sat at each end of the table in front of the window, which looked out on a square grass-plot bounded by an ivy-wall. Masses of snow already hung on the ivy, and the north wind had blown a great drift into a corner. It was snowing still, and one

or two bold but shivering robins came hopping on the window-sill.

"Poor little things! I'll fetch you some crumbs," said Letitia, who had quite recovered her usual good temper. The idea of Humphrey Barrett was too absurdly impossible to bear the light of day.

"Keep to your writing for the present," said Sir George. "I want those copies as soon as possible."

Presently, having finished another letter, he laid his pen down and leaned back for a minute.

"Imagine a military secretary, or an aide-de-camp, leaving his work to feed robins red-breasts!" he said, with a good humored smile.

"I don't believe that women do their work less well than men, because they are a little soft-hearted and can't endure to see birds starving in the cold," said Letitia.

"There is a time for everything," answered Sir George.

"It must seem rather strange to you, papa, to have me working with you instead of Captain Crosby," said Letitia, after a few minutes of diligent scratching.

"I feel like a man who has lost his right arm," said Sir George, thoughtfully. "Verily, grateful for your help, Letty, all the same."

"You like him very much, then, papa?"

"He has been extremely useful to me. He has a head, which is more than can be said of most young fellows. He will get on. The Duke has noticed him several times. Yes, I value Crosby, in spite of his faults."

"What are his faults?"

"Being an Irish adventurer, with all the absurdities of his nation, and nothing in the world but his pay."

"Oh!" said Letitia with a slight tone of satisfaction which Sir George did not notice. If it had struck him, and roused any train of thought, this story would most likely never have been written.

"He is the most hasty-tempered fellow I ever met with," he went on. "A few weeks ago he turned off a man for robbing him, without any evidence of the fact. All he told me was, that the rascal had a villainous face, and he could believe anything of him. Now that is not justice, and I told Crosby so."

"I should have agreed with him, most likely," said Letitia. "People's faces generally tell the truth."

"That is a very juvenile doctrine," said Sir George, smiling.

After another short silence Letitia looked up again.

"Where is Captain Crosby now, papa?"

"Yes; I left him at the hotel."

"Was he going home for New Year's Day?"

"Home, home!" repeated Sir George, with a letter in his hand. "Crosby? Why, no. He has no home, I suppose. He is an Irishman."

"But he has a home in Ireland?"

"I never heard of it. He appears to me to have no relations or connections of any kind. An adventurer—he has to carve his fortune for himself."

"Poor man!" said Letitia. "And yet he is a gentleman?"

"To be sure," said Sir George.

For the last few minutes his manner had been very absent, and he now began to frown, to mutter, and to twist the letter he held backwards and forwards.

"This must be explained. I have certainly mislaid my last letter. Confound it! what is the use of trying to do business without Crosby! The communication was made to him, too. This is most vexatious!"

"What is it, papa?"

"Business connected with the regiment."

Sir George gave no further explanation, but got up, pushing his chair back so hurriedly that the robins flew away in a fright. He walked once or twice up and down the room, and then stopped by the table.

"Mind, Letitia, I will have no unnecessary fuss. But tell me, honestly, would it be a great disturbance to Florida to have a bed made up in some small room for Crosby? He is a soldier, like myself; he wants no luxuries. But I can not settle this affair without him."

Letitia answered gravely that she had no doubt cousin Florida would be happy to receive Captain Crosby, or any friend of her papa's.

"Very well," said Sir George. "No extra trouble must be given in the house. I will write to Crosby at once, and send the letter by an express messenger. He will be here to-morrow."

He sat down again at the table.

"Papa," said Letitia, when the letter was half written, "excuse me, shall you take him to the ball? If so, you had better tell him to bring his uniform."

"I suppose they will be glad to see him," said Sir George, doubtfully.

"O fancy the delight of the Miss Barretts! A new partner, and an officer too!"

"Very true, poor girls. And Crosby is an agreeable fellow," said Sir George, so suspiciously that Letitia was ashamed of herself.

A man and horse were sent off to London through the snow.

Miss Monkton, in high spirits, tried on her dress and ornaments, and figured before the glass in her own room, till Miss Bushe, who was looking on, gave a little sigh.

"What is the matter?" said Letitia, looking round.

"Nothing, my dear. Only I should like to feel that your thoughts sometimes traveled beyond your own amusement."

"And don't they?" said Letitia. "I expect to amuse many people besides myself, and among them—hush! This ball of Humphrey Barrett's will not be so bad after all."

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

Mrs. Theresa Guack died recently in Cheyenne, Wyoming Territory, under circumstances that rendered necessary the empaneling of a Coroner's Jury. Mary C. Graham, Elsie H. Conroy, Lizzie A. Abney, Isabella Willford, Augusta Hufschmidt and Sarah Casper were summoned and sworn. They listened to the testimony and rendered a verdict in accordance with the facts. This is the first instance in history of a Coroner's Jury composed exclusively of women.

THE FADDA MURDER TRIAL.

End of a Celebrated Case in Rome.

(Some Correspondence London Standard.)

The verdict and sentence in this remarkable case have just been pronounced, and thus a trial which has lasted for thirty days and caused an amount of public interest and excitement almost unparalleled in this country has at length terminated. I have already informed you by telegraph of the main facts of the verdict and sentence. There remain to be said only a few words to supplement the account I have already given of this cause celebre. From an early hour this morning the Court of Assize was besieged by an eager crowd. The proceedings were announced to commence at 10 o'clock but it was 12 before the President took his place.

The prisoners had already been in the dock for more than an hour. The aspect of the whole assemblage was grave and anxious. The prisoners showed a perceptible increase of pallor, but no other outward sign of emotion. The jury was, as it has been throughout, earnest and attentive, the President serious, collected, dignified. His summing up was lucid and impartial, and, indeed, it may be said, speaking generally, that the official actors performed their parts in the last act of this tragic drama with a dignity and decorum which were not always manifest during its preceding stages. During the charge to the jury the silence was profound, and, as the President directly addressed them, every jurymen leaped forward simultaneously, as though moved by one common impulse.

The President, after having summed up the evidence at great length, instructed the foreman of the jury in what manner the verdict was to be communicated to the court. Nor were his instructions superfluous, for there were numerous and complicated counts against each of the three prisoners. Cardinali was accused of voluntary homicide with premeditation, qualified as murder; Raffaella Saraceni of being the principal agent in the aforesaid murder, for that she, after premeditation, did induce Pietro Cardinali, by a promise to marry him, to commit the crime, and did furnish him with the means of going to Rome for the purpose of accomplishing it; Antonietta Carozza of being an accessory before the fact. In delivering the verdict, these several accusations in all their technical minutiae were to be clearly rehearsed, and after each one the finding of the jury was to be conveyed by the utterance of a "Si" or a "No."

The former meaning that the prisoner was found guilty on that count, the latter not guilty. Before the jury retired to consider the verdict, the prisoners were led out of the hall, the man being handcuffed, as he has been each day, the women unbound, between two carabineers. Public opinion inclined to the supposition that the jury would take a long time to consider their verdict, and some persons even predicted that they would not be able to agree at all. Also, the great majority of the very many individuals of different classes with whom I have spoken on the subject confidently expected that Raffaella Saraceni would be acquitted, while they one and all believed her, nevertheless, to be guilty.

The death-like silence which had attended the President's final speech gave way, on the retirement of the jury, to a buzz of excited conversation. But the murmur as yet was not a loud one. The tension of men's minds was still too great. Three-quarters of an hour elapsed, which seemed to the waiting spectators an interminable interval. What must the time have seemed to that miserable trio whose fate depended on the issue! At length a stir, and the magnetic thrill running through the crowd announced the return of the jury. The prisoners were brought in. Cardinali is deathly pale, but quiet, the two women listlessly impassive. The foreman of the jury rises, and in an impressive, unaffected manner, reads out the sentence amid a silence which, like the Egyptian darkness, may be felt.

Cardinali guilty on all the counts; Raffaella Saraceni guilty on all the counts, save that which accuses her of having made a promise of marrying Cardinali her bribe for the crime; Antonietta Carozza guilty of complicity, but with extenuating circumstances. Then rises up the Public Prosecutor and demands, in accordance with such and such Articles of the Penal Code, that on Pietro Cardinali be inflicted the punishment of death; on Raffaella Saraceni that of imprisonment with hard labor, for life; on Antonietta Carozza imprisonment for a term to be fixed by the Court. The President announces that the Court will retire to consider the sentence, and he and his brother magistrates withdraw.

And now there appears a very striking psychological phenomenon in the demeanor of Raffaella Saraceni. Hitherto, the general feeling had leaned, if not to sympathy, at least to compassion in her case. All the unfavorable circumstances of her education and surroundings have been dwelt on. The fact that she is a woman barely 25 years old, exposed to the terrible moral torture of such a trial during 30 days, has somewhat touched the public feeling in her favor. But now, in watching her, it is impossible to stifle a sense of strong repulsion. She is, in a word, stone for her companions, melting wax for herself. She listens to the verdict on Cardinali with a countenance absolutely unmoved.

She hears the same finding against herself with a start of amazed horror. She sways to and fro, and looks around her appealingly, with an expression in her face and figure which says plainly, "Not me! for these others let the verdict pass but for me!" Amid the confused and hoarse murmurs of that human flood which fills the hall when the Judges have departed to consider the sentence, she is heard to speak disjointed words. They bring her water. Her advocate hastens to the dock, and speaks to her. By his countenance and gestures he is evidently bidding her be calm and await the sentence, and apparently soothing her with the hope that it will not be so severe as one as the Public Prosecutor has demanded.

The Court returns. In a dry, calm voice, with accent neither quicker nor slower than his ordinarily, the President

announces that the sentence of the Court is in complete accordance with the demand of the Public Prosecutor. Death to Cardinali. For Raffaella Saraceni, imprisonment, with hard labor, for life. The woman Carozza to be discharged from custody to-night. The prisoners are asked the usual formal question if they have anything to say. Cardinali, standing in a firm attitude, which has some quietude, bows his head in silence.

Raffaella, who has heard this man, her lover, her accomplice, in one sense her victim, condemned to die, with no more emotion than a marble statue, when her own turn comes exclaims in the wildest agitation: "Oh, dio, dio! I am innocent! I am innocent!" She is led out. A tiny bell tinkle. "The Court is dissolved," says the President, and then, in the twinkling of an eye, the multitude melts away and is gone. The great Fadda trial is at an end.

I have only two observations to add. The first is that there will probably be an appeal against the sentence, the general opinion being that the pain of death will not be inflicted on Cardinali. The second is that whereas, after the verdict and the demand of the Public Prosecutor that the penalty of the law should be enforced against the murderer and his accomplice, there was a deep and general murmur of "E giusto. E giustizia!" "It is just. It is very just!" Yet when the President announced that this just demand had been agreed to by the court, the public voice murmured audibly, "Oh! E troppo severo. Oh! povera donna! Oh piti!" "It is too severe. Oh, poor woman! Oh, heavens!" Thus the righteous punishment was to remain a theoretical piece of moral justice. To carry it out—really and actually to do what you say is right to be done—that is troppo severo! Well, perhaps there are more repulsive popular failings than this.

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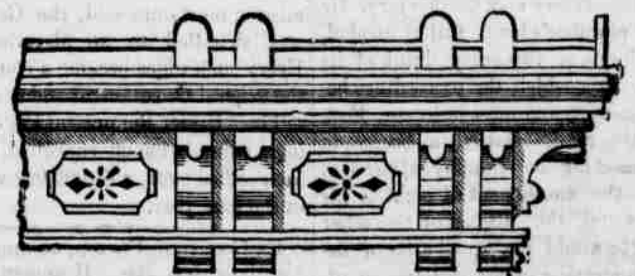
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